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STATE OF RELIGION AMONG THE SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES; REPORT OF SOCIETY FOR THE CONVERSION, INSTRUCTION, AND EDUCATION OF NEGRO SLAVES—BERMUDIAN SLAVES—EAST INDIA SLAVERY.

PURSUANT to the intention expressed in a former number, we shall now proceed to make some observations on a recently published Report on the state of religion among the slaves in our colonies. These observations may be found to apply, although in degrees very greatly varying, to more than one society, professing to be employed in instructing and educating the slaves. They will refer, however, more directly and immediately to a Society, entitled "The Incorporated Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the British West India Islands," whose Report for 1827, forming a volume of 240 pages, has lately reached us. This Report particularly claims attention, as the Society from which it proceeds has obtained the special patronage of the West India Bishops and Clergy, and of many distinguished Planters, and professes to extend its Christian efforts over the whole range of our West India possessions, thus taking the lead in the great work of evangelizing the slave population.

This Society was first incorporated in 1795, under the management of trustees, at the head of whom was placed the late Bishop Porteus, who had succeeded in obtaining, by a suit in Chancery, the appropriation to this, its original purpose, of a large bequest of that eminent Christian philosopher the Honourable Robert Boyle. In the year 1823, its form was materially changed, and its operations enlarged; and donations and annual subscriptions were solicited from the public at home and abroad, in order to promote more effectually the spiritual interests of the slave population, which had just then become the object of revived and intense interest. To give new vigour and activity to its operations, a Board of Governors was appointed, consisting not only of the former Trustees, but of several distinguished Prelates and Statesmen, and among them the two West Indian Bishops, to whom were

people about sixteen of the Metropolitan Clergy, (some of them dignitaries of the Church,) the Lord Mayor, and the two senior Aldermen of the City of London, and five or six of the most eminent of the West India clergy, namely, Lord St. John, Sir H. W. Martin, Bart., Mr. Munro, Mr. M. Palmer, Mr. H. H. H. Mr. Mathison, Major Moody, and Mr. Colquhoun.

Soon after the Society had assumed its present form, (in 1823,) it published a brief report, which was intended "to show the promise rather than the produce of its labors." This report we perused at the time with considerable satisfaction. We were particularly gratified with perceiving that the Governors did not shrink from including in their promise the hope of recovering for the slaves the enjoyment of a Christian sabbath. Their first report records, with apparent approbation, the suggestions of four West Indian clergymen on this important point. The Reverend Mr. Davis, of Nevis, contemplates the regulation of the Lord's day, and the allowing of some other time than Sunday for markets, as "a step *essential* to the progress of Christianity in the colonies," and conceives, that when once "wholesome laws are enacted on this head, and *carried into effect*, it will only need the active exertions of the clergy to secure, under the Divine blessing, a very considerable share of success." The Reverend Mr. Gilbert, of Antigua, himself the owner of an estate cultivated by slaves, declares that, if "*Sunday markets were abolished, and marriage sanctioned and encouraged*, he sees no reason why the slave population of Antigua should not become as moral, intelligent, and industrious as the free people of England." The Reverend Mr. Jefferson, of Vere, in Jamaica, expresses his hope that "if all even in the Sunday markets might take place, whence "the best possible profits might be expected?" and the Reverend Mr. Stanbury, of the same Island, looks forward, with the utmost solicitude, to a law "for *prohibiting the slaves from trading on the week throughout the year to secure Sunday, and for abolishing that base of colonial idleness, Sunday markets.*"

The hope in the subject of the Society, which was excited in our minds, by the apparently cordial concurrence of the Society's first Report in these just views of its correspondents, was further strengthened by the insertion of the following resolution, which had been adopted at a meeting, held in the Court Hall of Basseterre, St. Christopher's, in October, 1823, for the purpose of forming a Society auxiliary to this: "Resolved, That the *first*, and *most material* point for effecting any change in the moral and religious instruction of the slaves, is the *abolition of the Sunday markets, and the discharging, in every possible way, with all manner of work on that day.*"

If, however, we were gratified in discovering, in the Society's *first* communications to the public, such indications of its sense of the essential importance of securing a Sabbath to the slaves, our mortification has been proportionably increased on finding, in the years which have followed these hopeful notices, not even the slightest allusion of its own to the subject. Its subsequent reports maintain upon it, as far as its own opinions are concerned, the silence of death. How is this to be explained? Our solution of it is this. When the Governors of the

Society first came before the public, it was prior to their having had any specific information of the extraordinary state of feeling which pervades the West Indies, on the subject of Sunday labour and Sunday marketing, though, by one of their own correspondents, who well knew the case, it was said, "It is my opinion, this point will stand undressed longer than any by the planters; and there is nothing by which they are so much offended as by an appeal to their conscience on this point." In this ignorance as to the real feeling of the colonists, when Mr. Canning declared, in Parliament, that it was the intention of his Majesty's Government to abolish Sunday markets, and Sunday labour, and to give to the slaves other time in lieu of Sunday, the Governor of the Society took it for granted that a proposition so reasonable, and to which the West India body in this country had signified their assent, was not likely to meet with any serious opposition abroad, and would, as a matter of course, be generally adopted. Acting on that expectation, they did not hesitate to give to the public the different extracts cited above. But, before another year had rolled round, the Society, or at least some of its members, had, very probably, discovered that the colonial legislatures, and the colonists at large, were determined neither to abolish Sunday markets, nor to afford to the slaves adequate time, in lieu of Sunday, for cultivating their provision grounds. From that moment, at least from a time coincident with this discovery, all allusion to the desecration of the Sabbath, which did not slip in incidentally, disappeared from the reports of the Society, and the reader, therefore, who has not had access to know the state of things in the West Indies, might easily and naturally infer, from the language and tenor of its later reports, and especially of that for 1827, that Sunday is observed as in this country, and is a day, not of marketing and labour, as it really is, but a day of repose and religious observance.

This we cannot but regard as a failure in the Society's high obligations, and as involving a violation of their pledge to the public, although from any such intention we do most entirely acquit the great majority of those who ostensibly manage its affairs. It is for them, however, to probe the matter to the bottom, and to explain the causes why the reports of such a Society should seem studiously to shun to expose the fact that the slaves generally, and the agricultural slaves in particular, are deprived, by the existing colonial institutions, of the benefits of a Christian Sabbath; and why they should not distinctly have pointed out and denounced this evil as being, in truth, the grand impediment, in a professedly Christian land, to the success of the special objects of the Society, "*the conversion and religious instruction and education of the negro slaves*:" an impediment too, which, if it be not removed, must render abortive the Society's best efforts to introduce and extend among those slaves the light and influence of Divine truth.

The facts of the case must be well known to several of the Governors of the Society, as well as to the Bishops of Jamaica and Barbadoes; and, we believe, it has been pressed on their attention by several of the colonial Clergy, who have given it as their clear opinion that little can be done in converting, instructing, and educating the slave population, so long as Sunday, instead of being set apart for repose and religious

the slaves employed by the slaves in going to work on the plantations, and on the roads, but must, of necessity, be employed on the plantations employed.

Secondly, I am aware that the abolitionists of St. Christophers, and of other islands, were the first who have a real regard for religion, and that all the measures that can be adopted with a view to christianizing the slaves, accordingly, measure is more indispensable, (it is "the first and the most important," and that without which every other must prove comparatively unavailing) than to grant them equivalent time, in lieu of Sunday, for the secular objects of marketing and providing for their sustenance, by which, in Jamaica and in most of the colonies, Sunday has always been and is now occupied.

Let us mark this case on our own. Let us suppose Sunday to be, throughout this country, as it is in Jamaica, the *universal* market day, and, for the great mass of our population, the *only* market day. And let us further suppose, that the whole of our labourers, men and women, nay, the very children from six years old and upwards, were compelled by the dread or want of infliction of the lash, to labour, without wages, for the sole profit of a few privileged individuals, during 285 days of the year, from five in the morning till seven at night; and many of them, for about 100 of these days, for half the night besides; and that, with the exception of half a cherting, or at most a whole morning a day, given them by their masters, their sole means of procuring food for their sustenance was by employing the remaining 78 days of the year, being the 72 Sundays and 26 work days besides, in raising, or in waste, the corn, or potatoes, or oats, or beans, which they should then require for their own consumption, or which, on the Sabbath, they should carry in foot to the market held only on that day in the distant town, to be exchanged for other necessities or comforts. And then, having made these suppositions, let us ask ourselves what hope we could possibly indulge of seeing the people so employed become a moral and Christian people? And if a Society were to undertake the task of *converting, instructing, and educating* this people, should we not deem it that Society's first duty, especially if its members had power and influence, to represent, to the professedly Christian government under which they lived, the unchristian nature of such a system? It, however, instead of doing this, it should employ no effort to put an end to such an abomination, but should silently, and without a single remonstrance, acquiesce in the universal desecration of the Sabbath, what should we think of the aptitude of such a Society for the great and good work it had undertaken? Let us only imagine to ourselves Sunday after Sunday, without interruption, passed, by the whole of the labouring classes of this country, either in the journey to and from the market town, and in the din and bustle and dissipation of the market itself; or in the painful effort, after six days of uncompensated toil, of raising food to avert the famine of themselves and their families; and though we might say, as in the colonial case, that the labourers of Bishops, and of Clergymen, and of Societies for conversion, instruction, and education, with their missionaries and catechists, were only the more needed on this account, yet, could we

suppose, that all of these should go on for years, omitting to point out this grand impediment to their own efficiency, and not making one vigorous effort for its removal?

When this momentous subject has been pressed on the consciences of colonial Clergymen, their reply has been, "We have nothing to do with the temporal or political condition of the slaves; we meddle not, therefore, with the question of the Sabbath." But is it not to lose sight of all sound principle, to confound that question with merely *secular* objects? We admit, indeed, that the *temporal* interests of the slaves, as of our own labouring classes, are deeply involved in it; but is it not mainly and properly a *spiritual* question? Nay, does it not lie at the very root of *spiritual* improvement? Is it less of a spiritual object to obtain for the slaves the holy rest of the Sabbath, with all its attendant blessings, than to send forth catechists to teach them to learn, by rote, the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments? Is it, in a *spiritual* point of view, a matter of indifference whether the slave shall have a breathing time of repose, and be free to turn his feet to the house of God on the Sabbath; or shall be forced, on pain of starving, to drag, on that day, his wearied limbs to his distant provision grounds, there to provide food for himself and his family during the week; or shall have to pant under his load to the still more distant market town, there to mingle in the confusion and tumult and debauchery of, what Mr. Bickell justly designates a Pandemonium—a West India Sunday market? To apply to this evil the term *temporal* as distinguished from *spiritual*, seems to us a most extraordinary perversion of language. It is not a question of the cart-whip, or of the slave's legal rights of property, or of his right of giving evidence, or of his general destitution of civil privileges. It is a question which comes within the peculiar province of ministers of the Gospel in a Christian land, and lies at the very root of their usefulness in that capacity. What a mockery, on any other supposition, is the daily solemn recitation, at the altar, of the fourth commandment, followed by the earnest supplication of ministers and people, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law?"

We certainly do not well know how to excuse Conversion Societies, or Bishops, or Clergymen, or Missionaries, in their apparent oblivion of the duty of vindicating the sacredness of the Sabbath, and the *right* of the people, in countries avowedly Christian, to its blessings. We do not expect them to become partizans of the Anti-Slavery cause. But we do expect them to fulfil their solemn engagements, to discharge their duties as in the sight of God, and to vindicate the *right* of the negro to the Sabbath, of which he is iniquitously deprived. And putting the *slaves* out of the question, we would ask, what have they done to awaken the *free*, the *masters*, to a sense of their share in this crying sin? Will they say that the habitual violation of the Sabbath is not a crime, or that the fourth commandment is no longer a part of the Decalogue, or that the Bible does not abound with awful denunciations on this subject? At least the members and ministers of the Church of England cannot take such ground. Was it not always, and is it not now, their solemn and imperious duty, as intrusted with





The second head of complaint we have against this Society, is the ignorance in which the public are kept as to the precise nature of the

Jamaica, Grenada, St. Vincent's, Trinidad, Tobago, Dominica, &c. Sunday labour is compulsory on the slaves. They have had the boldness to affirm, that Sunday is, in fact, a day of repose for the slaves, as respects the necessity of labouring in their grounds on that day, the time allowed them by law, exclusive of Sunday, being, as is alleged, amply sufficient for that purpose. Among others a Mr. Barclay, of Jamaica, and a Mr. Green, formerly of the same island, but now of Suffolk, have ventured dauntlessly to advocate that position, and have thus, as we shall shew, completely discredited their testimony as witnesses in this controversy. Lest the hardihood of their assertions, however, should impose upon some, it may be worth while, once for all, to lay this question at rest.

Before the slave trade controversy commenced, no time, excepting Sunday, was, by any law, allowed the slaves in the English colonies for cultivating their provision grounds, even where their whole subsistence, a few herrings or a little salt fish excepted,) proceeded from this source. If there were any such law, let it be produced. But, indeed, our view of the case is fully established by the testimony of all the West Indian authorities, as recorded in the proceedings of the Privy Council, on an inquiry begun in 1787, and concluded in 1789. It thence appears, that though it was alleged to have been a frequent practice to give the slaves, out of crop, besides Sundays, an occasional day or half-day for their grounds, yet there was no law in any colony requiring it. To give or withhold it was wholly a matter of option. No day besides Sunday was given them, by law, for their own sustentation, and that of their families. In 1788, for the first time, was any law adopted in Jamaica itself on this subject—and the act of that year states, (whether true or false, is not the question), that though it had been customary to allow slaves one day in every fortnight, exclusive of Sundays, out of crop, to cultivate their grounds, yet *this indulgence not being compulsory*, it was enacted, "That the slaves, over and above the holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, shall be allowed one day in every fortnight to cultivate their own provision grounds, exclusive of Sundays, except during the time of crop." Now it will not be denied, that at the period in question the slaves were compelled to work on the Sundays on pain of starving: for though, prior to 1788, fifty-two Sundays in the year were allowed them for their grounds, yet the insufficiency of the time was such, that when the mother country began to look into the matter, it was thought necessary to enlarge it; and about fifteen or sixteen days were therefore added, by law, to the fifty-two Sundays already allowed them for that purpose. It is no where said in this or any subsequent act, nor was it alleged at the time, that those days were given for the purpose of securing to slaves the repose of the Sabbath. It was given them, exclusive of Sundays, expressly for cultivating their provision grounds. The reason of this enactment might be partly a conviction of its necessity, on account of the decreasing fertility of the soil—a curse which always follows slave cultivation: but this consideration, if it operated, was doubtless quickened in its effect, by being combined with the dread of the inquiry which had been commenced in England. However that may be, about this time Jamaica, and a few other islands, passed laws allowing to their slaves from fourteen to sixteen days in the year for their grounds, besides Sundays. This number has since been increased in Jamaica to twenty-six; while in Trinidad, Grenada, and some other islands there has been no increase, and in some no time at all is yet given by law. This increase in Jamaica may be supposed to proceed from the greater liberality of its planters; but, in truth, it arises from the necessity. The slaves must be fed, though ever so scantily, in order to live. In Trinidad and Grenada, where the soil is far more fertile than in Jamaica, sixty-eight days labour in the year, which is the utmost the slaves are there allowed, including Sundays, and which we shall shew is barely sufficient for their sustentation, will nevertheless do more to that end than seventy-eight days in Jamaica, where the soil is greatly inferior to that of the other two islands. The argument, however, of Mr. Barclay and his compatriot, that seventy-eight days are quite unnecessary; that twenty-six days are amply sufficient, and that the other fifty-two

that is employed in raising the produce of the soil, so that a slave can support himself and his family. When in this country we

see the slaves employed with the exception of Sunday and the day of relaxation, are days of constant labour, it is not only untrue, but absurd. If twenty six or twenty seven days in the year, during which alone the slaves labour for themselves, and at the compelling power of the cart-whip, and the lash, can raise produce equal to the food of the entire year, the remaining two hundred and eighty four days, during which they labour exclusively for their masters' benefit, and at the same time, be capable of producing, at least five times that quantity of produce. But is it the fact that in the West Indies the labourer yields to his master eleven times the value of the produce of his own toils? And even should the fifty-two Sundays be added to the twenty six week days, it will still be perfectly clear that even this increased number of days must, in the nature of things, be barely a requite to the sustenance of the labourer. In the Spanish and Portuguese colonies this is so largely the case, that, inclusive of the Sundays, at least one hundred and thirty days in the year are allowed to the slave who raises his own food for that purpose.

We have, however, a still more conclusive proof of our position in our own colonies. In Barbadoes the slaves are supplied not by provisions raised on the plantations, but by provisions raised in common, on the working days, and the masters account, and pay for the same impulse by which sugar or rum is raised. Now, the masters in Barbadoes concur with the authorities of the island in declaring that it requires one third of the labour of the year to raise the food necessary for this purpose, being one hundred and three days in all. See Papers presented by command for 1827, part 4, p. 286; see also Report, No. 10, p. 261. But this is four times as much as the twenty six working days allowed to the slaves in Jamaica; besides which, it is admitted that Barbadoes slaves are bound to their means of subsistence, and property, Sunday to the culture of their little gardens, for they have no other grounds. Even when the Sundays are added, the Jamaican slave has, for his subsistence, only seventy-two days' labour in the year, while the Barbadoes slave has thus secured to him, upon testimony, the labour of a hundred and fifty-two days. Now it is needless in part owing to this circumstance, and partly to the fact that the execution of the laws of Barbadoes, the execution of the laws is more exact there, while they are more lax in Jamaica; for whatever be the difference in the quality of the produce, it cannot possibly be so great as to count for the vast disproportion of time required for the sustenance of the labourer in the two cases. Certainly Jamaica does not exceed Barbadoes in the quantity of food raised. Jamaica exceeds Jamaica—and yet, as we will see, in the latter island, next to the fifty-two Sundays, in addition to fifty-two Sundays, it is absolutely necessary to keep the slaves from starving. The proportion of guinea corn in Barbadoes is a coat to a slave, in Jamaica it is 1½ wt; in Grenada it is 8 lb, and in Trinidad 11 lb. It cannot therefore be that a hundred and thirty-two week days, besides Sundays, should be required to raise the food of the slave in Barbadoes, and that five days six week days, Sunday, as is asserted, being wholly unoccupied, should be sufficient in Jamaica. Neither can it be that twenty six week days should be sufficient for the slave's sustenance in Jamaica, with the slaves being forced to add to them the labour of Sundays, while in Grenada and Trinidad sixteen week days are declared to be the sufficient number, if twenty six Sundays are added to the number.

But that this reasoning is perfectly conclusive, yet we will not leave to another to rest our case on such feeble references. We will therefore add a few more of the same testimony.

It is here I should think, and to sixteen days in the year is allowed to the labourer, and that, his provisions are small, yet we learn from the official statements of the planters to the select committee of their body, that, previous to the former emancipation, 1. March, 1824, they had been in the habit of compelling the slaves to cultivate their grounds on the Sunday, and we learn also from Sir Ralph Woodford's third communications, that as a day in lieu of Sunday

speak of *educating* the lower orders, we may attach various meanings to the expression. The most ordinary comprehends reading, writing,

had not been given to the slaves, he had found it impracticable to carry into effect that part of the order which forbade Sunday labour; and which, in point of fact, had not been executed, the slaves continuing to work regularly in their grounds on Sunday as before.\* They must have done so or starved. In Grenada, about sixteen week days were also allowed to the slave by law, yet in the year 1817, when that law was in full force, we have the Rev. Mr. Nash, a clergyman of that island, distinctly telling us, that when he remonstrated with the slaves for not coming to church, their reply to him was, that if they came to church they must starve. "The plea," says Mr. Nash, "is so reasonable, that I cannot oppose it, but I heartily wish their masters would deprive them of it by allowing them one day in each week to labour for themselves."

The language quoted above (p. 310) from the *first* report of the Society, whose *last* report we are now considering, is also decisive. But this is not all—in the report now before us, the framers of it, with all their caution, have let out a very curious and important fact. It occurs in the letter of a clergyman of St. Vincent's, (p. 32.) "There is reason to believe," says this clergyman, "that the congregation of slaves will increase in number; and particularly *when the obligation to cultivate their lands on the Sabbath day ceases*. On one or two estates this obligation does not exist, one day in the week throughout the year being allowed them." This single sentence thus incidentally introduced establishes irrefragably every word we have ever asserted on this subject.

But let us come to Jamaica itself.—In addition to what we have already said respecting this island, we will not dwell on the testimony of the Rev. Richard Bickell, though it is quite decisive; nor on that of the Rev. Mr. Cooper, which is no less so; because *they* will be held to be partizans of the Anti-Slavery cause. And yet can any circumstance more strongly prove the point, than that Mr. Hibbert, and his agent, Mr. Oates, when desirous of allording Mr. Cooper an opportunity of preaching to Mr. Hibbert's negroes, should feel that they could not, in justice, require the negroes to attend him on Sunday, but set apart an afternoon in the week for the purpose. Why not on Sunday, if on Sunday they were disengaged from labour?—Neither will we dwell on the unexceptionable testimony of the Wesleyan Methodists, as forced from them by Mr. Marryat's unwarrantable attack in 1816, when the Rev. Richard Watson, in his admirable defence of their missions, was under the necessity of citing, from their private communications, such facts as these, "Sunday is chiefly spent by the field negroes in working their own grounds, *which is the source whence they derive their food*, or in bringing what little produce they may have to market; for Sunday is the grand public market day throughout the West Indies."—Again, on the Sabbath, "a driver, with an overseer, accompanies the slaves to the negro grounds, given to them in lieu of allowance from their masters. Here they spend the blessed Sabbath, toiling all day. This is their rest." (Watson's Defence of Methodist Missions, published by Blanchard, p. 59, 60.) We will not, as we have said, dwell on these testimonies, strong and decisive as they are, but refer to authorities wholly and properly West Indian.

Our first shall be Dr. Williamson's, who resided for fourteen years in Jamaica, a part of that time on Lord Harewood's estate in St. Thomas in the Vale. This gentleman was most vehemently opposed to the views and projects of the abolitionists, and a strenuous advocate for the continuance of slavery; and yet his work, published in 1817, abounds in statements respecting the desecration of the Sabbath, which, he tells us over and over again, is a day of marketing and labour for the slaves, and of excess and brutal debauchery for the Whites. He returned to Jamaica in 1823, on the medical staff of the Island: in a letter of his now before us, written in the following year, and only a few months before his death, and which exhibits the same opposition as before to the views of the abolitionists, he fully confirm his former testimony respecting the

\* See p. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 258.

and some acquaintance with the first four rules of arithmetic. So our course is the same in its very lowest sense without including such a knowledge of letters as enables pupils to read the Bible with facility. The Education of the Society whose report we are now considering does not, except in a few cases, rise even to this first step in the ladder of learning. We do not mean to say that the Society of itself excludes

desecration of the Sabbath, as equally applicable to the period at which he wrote.

Our next witness shall be Mr. Stewart, a gentleman who quitted Jamaica in 1821, after residing there above twenty years. He is no friend to the Anti-Slavery cause; but takes the part of the colonists against its supporters. He is apologizing for the alleged inattention of the Jamaica clergy to the religious instruction of the slaves, and "the truth," he says, "is, that however willing they may be to perform their duty, very few of the slaves have it in their power to attend church. *They are either in attendance on their owners, or their time is occupied in a necessary attention to their own affairs; for Sunday is not a day of rest or relaxation to the plantation slave: he must work on that day or starve.*"

(Stewart's View of the Past and Present State of Jamaica, p. 157.) Yet from 1816, the slaves had had twenty-six week days in the year allowed them, and they have no more now.

A still more important witness, if possible, is a gentleman of the same name, member for Frelawney, and Father of the House of Assembly, the Hon. James Stewart. In a speech which he made to his constituents in May, 1826, and which is recorded in the Gazette of Jamaica of the 3rd of June 1826, we find the following passage:—"In respect to the instruction of the negroes in the principles of religion, it is not sufficient to build extra chapels for their accommodation. It is also absolutely necessary, *if we are sincere in our desire to improve their moral condition, that Sunday markets should be abolished altogether, and another day in the week be allowed the negro for the cultivation of his land, and the sale of his provisions.*" Mr. Stewart is himself a planter.

In the very same newspaper which contained this speech, there appeared a communication from a correspondent, seconding the recommendations of Mr. Stewart to abolish Sunday markets, and to give to the slaves a day instead of Sunday. "The negroes," he adds, "would feel this a great boon, and a few years would produce a great improvement in their moral character."

We will adduce one more witness on this head, and that is, the gentlemen of the West Indian Committee in London, who, in 1823, were so convinced of the truth we are now endeavouring to establish, that they fully assented to the necessity of putting an end to marketing and labour on the Sunday, and of giving equivalent time to the slaves on other days for those purposes. Would they have done so had they not known that the desecration of the Sabbath to such purposes was undeniable? And yet these gentlemen, some of them Governors or Members of the Society for the Conversion, Instruction, and Education of the Negro Slaves, have allowed more than five years to pass without an effort to apply a remedy to the admitted evil, nay, almost hiding its very existence. Their own slaves, and the slaves of many other distinguished Members of both Houses of Parliament, and of many others not in Parliament, who profess a high regard for the spiritual interests of their dependents,—are still left without a Sabbath; are still left, after a week of forced labour in the cane piece, to toil, throughout the whole of that blessed day, in raising food for themselves and their families, or in carrying the produce so raised to market. What possible excuse can be given, by these planters, to God, and to their country, and to their own consciences, for the continuance of this enormous evil?

After this let us leave the public to judge of the confidence which may be placed in such writers, on the side of slavery, countenanced and boasted of by many of the West Indian party, as Mr. Barclay and Mr. Green.

We must increase the size of this note by a single additional observation drawn from us by seeing the West India practice respecting Sunday defended

letters from its plan of education, but it acquiesces in their exclusion, not only without remonstrance but with an appearance of complacency and satisfaction, and at least without a single murmur. Nay, it is only by means of incidental notices, and not from distinct and direct statements, that we are enabled to collect the fact, that the art of reading is generally excluded. The common reader of these Reports therefore whose jealousy may not have been awakened by circumstances, or whose opportunities of information from other sources may be small, would not be led to suspect that, notwithstanding all the multiplied details respecting education which the Report before us contains, and notwithstanding all the busy bustling activity of catechists and teachers of which it gives an account, the knowledge of letters is the subject of almost universal exclusion from the Society's efforts to promote education among the slaves. We do not mean to say that the Society is answerable for those inveterate prejudices of the planters which confine its teachers to oral instruction; or for that lust of gain which leads them to refuse to spare even the youngest children from their unceasing toil, in order to learn to read the word of God. But we think the Society ought to tell us precisely how the case stands; what are the hindrances to its success; what measures also it has adopted to introduce a better state of things; and how those measures have been hitherto defeated. It seems extraordinary that a Society for the *conversion, instruction, and education* of a whole community, should have made no palpable efforts to have them taught reading, that grand medium of effective and permanent instruction. Its funds appear to be employed almost entirely in sending catechists to such plantations as will receive them, for an hour or two in every week, or fortnight, or three weeks, or month, to teach a few children on each to repeat the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and among the rest, as in mockery, the *fourth*. And if we allow that even this is better than nothing, yet let its actual amount be understood and appreciated. Let us at least be plainly told the whole truth. We shall then see the real magnitude of the obstacles which slavery presents to the temporal and spiritual interests of its wretched thralls.

A third point of defect observable in this Report and in all the Reports we have seen of Societies engaged in teaching the negroes, is a want of precision and distinctness, or what appears almost like a purposed obscurity, in communicating to the public the real nature and amount of their labours. We ought to have clear tabular statements, shewing the *number* of pupils who are taught; the particular *days and hours of the day* they are engaged in being taught; the *things* they are

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by the laxity of its observance on the Continent, and in the parishes of London and other great towns; and by the Sunday posting and travelling which prevail among us. We wish neither to deny nor to palliate these evils. And yet there is surely a wide difference between the two cases. We may admit it to be impossible to compel men to sanctify the sabbath, without admitting it to be right to compel them to employ it in labour. We may question whether it be in the power of human legislation to restrain its voluntary profanations, and yet absolutely deny the propriety of making starvation the penalty inflicted on the West Indian slave who shall rest from his labours on that day and keep it holy.

taught, then progress in the art of *reading, writing, &c.*, or whether the teaching is strictly and *exclusively oral*. We ought also to be told distinctly how many of the scholars under these several heads are *free*, and how many *slaves*. At present the whole are for the most part unbounded together without discrimination, so that when fifty or a hundred children are said to attend a school, for any thing that appears, they may be all slaves, or they may be all free. The impression on the minds of uninformed persons would generally be that they were all slaves. The probability is where reading is taught, if the contrary be not *clearly stated*, that they are all free.—Why all this particularity, it may be asked? Is it not equally important to teach the free as the slaves? Without doubt we would have them all taught. But the *professed*, the special object of this Society, as well as the more prominent object of other Societies, and the special ground on which they solicit and obtain subscriptions, are the Conversion, Instruction, and Education of the *Negro Slaves*, who, unlike the free, have no access to other means of being taught than such as may thus be opened to them. The *free* may send their children to school every day and all day long. If schools are not erected for them, it is in a great measure their own fault: they have the means of instituting them; and in Jamaica and various other colonies, with the aid of the Baptists and Methodists, they have already done much. If they are actually solicitous for education, they can obtain it. Not so in the case of slaves. In respect to them the matter *wholly* depends on the will of the master or his delegate. Although therefore it is as important that the free should be taught as that the slaves should be taught, yet it is of still higher moment that we should take special care, that under vague and general terms, which apply alike to slave and free, we are not led to suppose that the slaves are taught, when in truth they are not taught. The nation's money has been given, and the Society's money has been subscribed, for this special object. We ought to know that both are duly applied to that object. A striking instance of the injurious effect of this vagueness occurs at the very outset of the present Report, where we are told of associations formed in the different islands for the *same* objects as those of the Society, so that "there is not at the present moment" it is said "an island in the West India colonies without its regular school in full operation," p. 9. Now when we come to look carefully into particulars, we find that the Associations spoken of, and which are enumerated in the Report, are *all*, not for the benefit or instruction of *slaves*, but for the benefit of the *free exclusively*, and what is more, they are chiefly supported by the free people of colour themselves.

On the absence of all legal sanction to marriage, and of all legal protection to conjugal rights, as respects the slaves in Jamaica and the other colonies we have already said so much, that we need not now enlarge upon it. We advert to it merely for the purpose of saying that this sad evil, amounting to the very core of the moral condition of the slaves, is overlooked by the Society, just as it has overlooked the universal desecration of the sabbath. Marriages are talked of indeed, but nothing is said of them after nullity in point of law. (See No. 19, p. 265.)

The last complaint we have to put forward against this Society is its

permitting the framers of its Reports to make them subserve the purposes of a party. They contrive, for example, by means of a foot-note at p. 3, to inform the public, that “a bill for the improvement of the slave population has been passed in St. Kitt’s: the Sunday market is limited.” Now really, if the Society deems it a temporal object, inconsistent with its spiritual functions, to contend for giving a Christian Sabbath to the slaves, they ought not at least to do what they can to impede that object, by representing it as in any degree already effected, when it is in no degree effected. By the law of St. Kitt’s,\* which the Report designates as an improvement, Sunday markets, instead of being abolished, are continued and legalized; and neither by that or by any other law of St. Kitt’s, is any time, not an hour in the week, given to the slave for marketing or for labouring for himself, besides Sunday. In St. Kitt’s, the legislature, instead of recognising the sacredness of the Sabbath, has legalized its desecration. And this is the Act which this Society exhibits as an *improvement*. Even Mr. Huskisson, less sensitive, if may be assumed, on this point, than the conductors of a religious institution, cannot approve of the manner in which the law of St. Kitt’s regulates Sunday markets and Sunday labour; and even his extenuatory remarks are less applicable so St. Kitt’s than to any other island in the West Indies. (No. 38, p. 273.)

Again the Report takes occasion to inform the public that Sunday markets are abolished in Barbadoes; but it omits to tell them that no time is given to the slave in lieu of Sunday. It informs them too, that slave evidence is in certain cases admitted, and a protectorate for the slaves constituted by law;† but it wholly overlooks the fact that Mr. Huskisson, in the letter of the 18th of October, 1827, distinctly states that both regulations are almost worthless; the qualifications of the law of evidence being such as “greatly to impair its value;” and it being “*impossible* to regard the establishment,” of a protectorate under the present law “as an effectual substitute for the office of protector of slaves,” recommended by Lord Bathurst. Let these specimens suffice to shew the ground of this last head of complaint.

We have been detained so long by these General observations, that we have little space left for the details of the Report. It has for its motto, an extract from a letter of the Bishop of Barbadoes, which, in a somewhat different sense from his Lordship, we have endeavoured in the preceding pages to reduce to practice. “Could the public throughout the mother country be once put in possession” says the Bishop, “of what is really doing, and an earnest appeal be made to their religious feelings, I cannot think that means would be wanting to enable the Society not only to support, but to extend still further, and with such alterations as circumstances may require, the present system of religious instruction.” We believe, on the contrary, that if the case were understood, means would not be wanting to bring to reform the whole of that system. The Bishop of Jamaica indeed goes farther, and speaks of his conviction of its *efficiency*; and his non-objection may have weight with some. But we venture to think that both his and the Bishop of

\* See No. 38, p. 273. † See No. 28, p. 88, 89.

But we have said already, and we must repeat, for their own efficiency and for that of the Society, and every other similar Society, by the single measure of obtaining a Christian Sabbath for the slaves, than by all they have done, or can do, for the slaves, or by all the sums they have raised, or may yet raise, for the slaves. (p. 118, 119.)

But let us come to particulars,—and first as to the Diocese of JAMAICA. In Jamaica there are twenty-one parishes, which the Report estimates to contain about 15,000 Whites, 30,000 free Blacks and People of Colour, and upwards of 320,000 Slaves, in all 371,000 souls. The number of places of worship amounts to all, including Churches, Chapels, and Licensed Houses connected with the Church of England, to thirty-eight, capable of accommodating 15,400 persons, or a twenty-seventh part of the population. In most of these places there is only one service, in several of them two services, and in two or three, three services a week; but in not a few of them there is no sermon, except occasionally. In many cases the attendance appears to be very small.

With respect to education, such as is given to the slaves, and to them we confine our view, appears to consist almost exclusively of oral instruction, and is confined either to the catechising after service of such as choose to present themselves for that purpose, or to the visits of catechists to those estates the owners of which are willing to admit them. The whole number of such estates appears to be about 120, nearly half of which are situated in a single parish, St. James's in the East. The catechetical instruction there given, consists almost exclusively of teaching those who attend in church, or the children on the estates, to repeat the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, and to recite the Catechism of the Church; and even this measure of instruction is limited at most, to a single hour or two in the week, and in many cases to the same time once in a fortnight, or three weeks, or even a month.

Having thus mentioned the circumstances which apply generally to the whole Island, we shall proceed to notice what there is peculiar in the account given of the different parishes.

1. In *St. Catherine's*, in which Spanish town, the capital, is situated, 193 adults and 1402 children, chiefly domestics, out of 7,500, are catechised during two hours of the week, forty or fifty attending at a time. "Their instruction is not thorough." (p. 120.)

2. In *St. Dorothy's* there are no schools. After the single weekly service offered in the church, the rector is ready to catechise such slaves as offer themselves; but it is not said that any do offer themselves. The rector thinks that "there is, at least, *something necessary*" in this parish, containing upwards of 4,000 slaves. This is only ridiculous, but when he adds, that improvement is making greater and more rapid strides every day among the slaves, and that their superstitions decline daily; this must be mere romance. It is reaping without sowing, the result without the means. How can the Society give credence to such crude statements?

3. In *St. John's* containing 6,300 slaves, the only place of worship holds 100 persons, and after its one weekly service, twenty children are catechised, while three or four slaves does not appear.

4. In *Caribbean*, containing 18,000 slaves, there is church-room for only 215 hearers. The Catechists give oral instruction occasionally to 925 adults and 210 children, but neither in this parish nor St. John's, is there any school of any kind for the Slaves.

5. In *St. Thomas in the Vale*, containing 12,000 slaves, very few slave children appear to be even catechised. It is mentioned as a peculiar *indulgence* on one estate, that during crop, "a portion," it is not said what portion, "of the Saturday afternoon is allowed the slaves to visit their *private grounds*, that there may be no excuse for absence from service on the following day." There

\* Mr. Paine, the minister of St. Andrew's, and one of the governors of this Society, has calculated that the three or four last mentioned, on which there are about 500 slaves, produce, in all, 1000 slaves, or a third of the number he accounts he gave on the Sabbath, and that the same number of effects produced among them by Christian instruction, would be the same as the same number of slaves who are now unpermitted to them. We have looked in vain for any other account of the education of the slaves in this report, sufficiently accurate to be of any use.



would otherwise then be an excuse for not attending chapel on Sunday. Truth is mighty, and we see how this incidental expression demolishes whole hosts of hardy and groundless assertions, as to the repose enjoyed on a Sunday by the slaves of Jamaica.—And with all this meagreness of instruction, the rector tells us that “a decided moral and religious change” has taken place among the negroes since he has been there! This is miraculous!

The most extraordinary circumstance in this Report is, that the Society should have chosen to give publicity to an evidently false and fabricated statement, proceeding from the rector of this parish, which, both for his sake and that of the Society, ought to have been suppressed. It appears to be pointed at the Baptists or Methodists, and reminds us of the tales circulated in the first ages respecting the early Christians. “It is stated,” says the rector, “on unquestionable authority, that secret meetings take place in parts of this parish, at which are black and brown preachers, both free and slave, of the greatest ignorance, and of the lowest description. Money is exacted; penance and fasts enjoined.” “The usual practice is to assemble at night once or twice a week.” “In the altered countenances and emaciated appearance of the deluded creatures who attend these nocturnal meetings, *there is ample proof of the injury sustained by their health, as also by their habits of fasting, exposure to the night air, and loss of rest.* The evil arising from total abstinence from any food, during the day, or a longer period, is further increased by their afterwards eating such a quantity of victuals, as has in some cases, caused almost immediate death, and always brings on an unhealthy state of body. There are farther evils which have a most pernicious effect upon health and morals prevalent among the females,\* who, through fear or disgrace, consequent upon a public expulsion from the religious society which they have joined, are induced to take measures to prevent their frailties being discovered.”—Disgrace! frailties!—The hoax is somewhat too broad and palpable even for Great Britain.—And yet, with all this pretence to minute accuracy, to “unquestionable authority,” to “ample proof,” we are further told—“It is difficult to ascertain the real persuasion of those who attend. They denominate themselves Baptists, although the ministers in town disclaim all connexion whatever with them, or even *any knowledge of them.*” “As they disperse immediately on the approach of a white person, it is not easy to speak with accuracy of their proceedings.” It is stated, however, that they baptize, marry, and administer the Sacrament; but, there is reason to believe, that many of their doctrines are grossly repugnant to the spirit of Christianity.—Certainly repugnant to it as practised generally in Jamaica, if marriage be a part of their religion.—Now, we ask, is it possible that a rector can have written such a statement as this; that a Bishop can have gravely transmitted it across the Atlantic; and that a Society, governed by such high and respectable names, can have deemed it right to publish it to the world, in a detail of their efforts to convert, instruct, and educate the 330,000 slaves of Jamaica?—Alas! alas!

6. In *St. Mary's*, containing 26,200 slaves, there are no schools for slaves either on Sundays or week days. The curate catechises candidates for baptism and marriage on a Sunday, and gives a lecture, and reads prayers to those who choose to attend. It is not said that any do attend. For two hours, once a week, he teaches about forty-five slave children, on two estates, Hopewell and Cromwell, to repeat the Lord's Prayer and Creed. It is then added, as an instance, we presume, of extraordinary liberality on the part of the owners of these two estates.—“The time,” namely, the two hours a week, “is, in both instances, taken from the master.” That is to say, it is not taken from the Sunday, nor from the interval of two hours at noon tide, allowed the slaves on other days for relaxation. The proprietors of *St. Mary's*, it is said, “do not object to their slaves being taught to read.” It does not appear, however, that one slave is taught to read in that parish.

7. In *St. Anne's*, containing 24,000 slaves, all we hear of the labours of the rector, the well-known Mr. Bridges, besides his single service in the week, is his having given notice, that he means, on the morning of each Wednesday and

\* It is very greatly to be regretted, that the Report does not state, how the open and universal dissoluteness of manners prevailing among the females, is to be corrected.

Saturday, to instruct the slaves for baptism. A chapel in his parish, he tells us, holds eighty whites, and one hundred negroes. This singular appropriation brings us to view the general prevalence of that scrupulous and systematic separation of the spaces allotted to different classes, in West India churches, so as to prevent the parts allotted to the whites being contaminated by the negro touch.

8. In *Here*, containing 7,500 slaves, the rector, after his one weekly service, is said to be ready to catechise, but we are not told that any come to be catechised. On an estate of Sir H. Fitzherbert, thirty children receive oral instruction. On another estate, belonging to Mr. Wildman a catechist resides to instruct the slaves. It is not said what they are taught, but the Bishop expresses himself much pleased with their progress.

9. In *Winchester*, some slaves, we are not told how many of its 16,000, receive oral instruction. A few children learn to read, but whether they are free or slaves does not appear.

10. In *Port Royal*, of 7,000 slaves, about twenty children are catechised.

11. In *St. David's*, there are no schools of any kind. The slaves are 7,000, and the church holds 150.

12. In *St. Thomas's in the East*, there is church room for 1,500, the slaves being 21,500. On five estates the children enjoy the peculiar privilege of being taught to read, and on forty-five other estates the children are catechised, so that 3000 slaves receive more or less of religious instruction. And, on the whole, through the zeal of its rector, Mr. Trew, this parish has exhibited far more of effort and of success in the instruction of the slaves than any other in the island.

13. In *Portland*, from thirty to sixty slaves, out of 7,500, are catechised at church, after its single weekly service. Eight estates are visited occasionally by a catechist.

14. In *St. George's*, containing 13,000 slaves, the children of ten estates are occasionally visited for catechetical instruction.

15. In *St. Andrew's*, a few slaves are catechised after service on Sunday, and 300 out of 11,500 on the estates to which they belong.

16. In *Kingston*, a school has recently been established by the Bishop, which is attended by 100 slaves out of 15,500, but nothing specific is said of the nature or extent of the instruction given them. In this city the free people of colour have done much to educate themselves, and the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists, are said to have been active in the work of instruction.

17. In *St. Elizabeth's*, containing 19,500 slaves, there is church room for 3200 persons. A curate occasionally catechises the children on ten or twelve estates. Another curate is preparing 375 slaves for baptism, and hopes "to have several made Christians by the end of the year."

18. In *Trinity*, containing 26,500 slaves, two hours in the week are given to catechising the children on the estates of Mr. Minto. After service, (there being room for 550 persons) those who present themselves are catechised.

19. In *St. James's*, containing 24,000 slaves, 100 adults, and twenty or thirty children, (whether free or slaves, is not said) attend in church for catechetical instruction. A chaplain of the Society resides on Lord Seaford's estates, who allows him £100 a year and a house. He preaches there to a congregation of 150, and thence as from a centre visits and catechises once a week the children on sixteen estates.

20. In *Hanover*, containing 22,500 slaves, there is said to be a Sunday school at a chapel, but nothing is told us of its nature or numbers.

21. In *Westmoreland* there is said to be a Sunday school for slaves, but without stating by how many it is attended. On two estates 116 children, and at the chapels 100 to 150 adults are catechised. Something is said of Sunday traffic having been stopped at Savannah la Mar, the chief town. It is also said, that a great and visible improvement has taken place among the people of colour, who have become more religious and more industrious, while, through their improved morals and industry, the general prosperity of the parish has also increased.

The mean features of the Report from the Diocese of BARBADOES, including the Windward and Leeward islands and Guiana, do not differ materially from

those of the Jamaica Report. The white and free coloured population appears to amount to about 80,000, the slaves to 350,000. The church room for this mass of 430,000 human beings falls short of 17,000. The instruction given is, with rare exceptions, exclusively of the oral and catechetical kind.—The recitation of the Lord's prayer, the creed, the ten commandments, and the catechism seems to comprehend the whole.

Something is said in speaking of *Barbadoes* itself, in praise of the system now pursued with the too long neglected bondsmen of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. We will not now enter on that opprobrious case, trusting that a beneficial effect may have been produced by the salutary exposure of more than a century of irreparable supineness which has been made by the Rev. John Riland, with equal boldness, judgment and truth.\* We shall rejoice to find that things have really improved.—In the Parish of St. Michael, where Bridgetown, the capital stands, 454 slaves, out of nearly 18,000, are said to be educated, but nothing is said of the kind of education they receive, or of the time given to it. The Rector of St. George's talks largely of the good done and doing, yet we find that with a population of 8,500, he cannot fill a church which holds but 300. He is only *looking forward* to such an enlargement of his congregation as may eventually fill it.—In St. Lucy's, the parish of the persecuted Mr. Hart, the children of three estates belonging to Mr Goodrich are taught to read. There is only one other estate in the island, on which we can trace the existence of the same mode of instruction. Oral instruction indeed extends to many estates, to the extent of an hour occasionally, once a week, or fortnight, or month; but how many are taught even in this unprofitable manner does not appear. In the same parish of St. Lucy, and in that alone, we hear of the gratifying sight of some "adults"—slaves, we presume—who having found means from *their own resources* to have themselves taught to read, appear at church with their prayer books, and join in the service.—In St. James's, it is said that £500 a year is expended on *the poor*. This might be supposed to refer to *the slaves*. Not so; there are returns before parliament which show that all the money expended on *the poor*, is expended not on *blacks*, but on *whites* exclusively.

In *Antigua*, much had been done to instruct the slaves long before the appointment of a Bishop, although on a plan certainly very defective, yet we believe superior to that which now generally prevails. Since that plan has superseded the former, things appear to us to have retrograded. The Bishop's new rules have led to the removal of some experienced and pious teachers, and filled their places with persons not very fit to be religious instructors. Happily the Moravians and Methodists have large and flourishing establishments in this island, so that the evil of the new measures has to a certain degree been counteracted. But even in this favoured island, we hear but of two instances of slaves being taught to read, and we have no clear information of the nature and extent of the education given to the slaves; and this obscurity too much pervades the Reports of other Societies as well as of this. Still great good is evidently doing in *Antigua*.

In *St. Christopher's*, the work of education appears remarkably backward. One clergyman complains of the general unwillingness of the planters to admit upon their estates even the catechists, harmless as they are rendered either for good or evil. By another, Proprietors are urged, if they cannot spare all the slave children from work, they would at least allow *some* to attend, who, after a time, may impart to others what they acquire. (p. 186.) Even in *Antigua*, we hear of children, (p. 103.) whom their teachers, in order to instruct at all, must instruct at night.

In *Dominica*, it is not stated that any thing in the way of instruction has been effected. And yet, we all remember the loud boasts made there, in 1824, of religious progress, and the indignation with which the charge of neglecting to instruct their slaves was repelled.

In *St. Vincent's*, it is just possible that thirty-six children may be taught

\* See a pamphlet, published by Hatchard, entitled "Two Letters, &c. relative to the coloured estates of the Society for the propagation of the Gospel." By the Rev. John Riland, &c. &c.

their letters. In *Grenada*, it is still more doubtful whether a single slave be so taught. In *Trinidad*, we do not find that any thing has yet been attempted in the way of educating slaves. In *Demerara*, the only traces of such education we discover, are in about fifty slaves living near le Resouvenir, the former residence of the murdered Missionary Smith, who are doubtless the fruits of his labours, and who appear in Church with their prayer books, and in a school formed by the Church Missionary Society, under the Rev. Mr. Strong.

We have alluded to the restrictive regulations of the Bishop. One of them is that Catechists, before being licensed, shall subscribe a declaration that they shall not preach nor *interpret*, but only teach and read what the Minister shall direct. Now this rule seems to nullify the very end of a West India catechist's appointment. He is not to *interpret* to the slaves what he reads. If the catechists are not wholly unfit for their office, surely they ought at least to be allowed to *interpret* what they read, to pupils who probably do not know the meaning of a single sentence of what they are made to commit to memory. They are thus, it would seem, debarred from satisfying curiosity, or solving difficulties; and if asked the meaning of the words *thy kingdom come*, they must refer the inquirer to the Rector's next visit. This is going beyond even the Church of Rome.—Nor is all that is prescribed to be read by the catechists quite unexceptionable. What shall we say to such words as these inserted in a prayer which the Bishop directs to be used, every morning, on plantations, "Thou, O God, didst, in our baptism, pour thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, and receive us into the number of thy children by adoption and grace." Are all plantation slaves then baptized? Or if they are, is it decent to apply such terms to them universally? Supposing them to be applied to the 9000, whom a few years ago the Rev. Mr. Bridges baptized at half a crown a head, while Rector of Manchester; or to the 25,000 baptized in the course of a few months, in St. Mary's, by another Jamaica Rector,—should we not say that it was little better than a profanation of the most sublime truths of Christianity?

### BERMUDA SLAVES.

ABOUT the middle of September last, two vessels arrived at Belfast, from Bermuda, navigated by eleven negroes of that Island, who were slaves. Their circumstances led to some inquiry before the magistrates of Belfast, during which it was explained to them that they were under no obligation to return to Bermuda, if they preferred to remain in England. Eight of them declared it to be their wish to return to their families and friends. Three preferred the alternative of remaining in England, saying they wished to be free. The Belfast Newspaper adds the following statement.—

"The men spoke English very well, and conversed familiarly with different gentlemen in the Court room. They said, that in Bermuda their employment was not very laborious; they did some work on the Sabbath days, but not much. They usually attended a Protestant place of worship; there were not any Roman Catholics in Bermuda. They said they were usually hired out by their masters, who got two-thirds of their earnings, and they got the other third. Before they came away they knew they might be free here. They appeared to be content and happy, and made no complaint against either their masters or captains. When they spoke of returning to their families and friends, their looks indicated the finest emotions and susceptibilities of affection. They all left the Court House together, and returned to their ships, except the three young men before mentioned, who had claimed their freedom.

"Let not the advocates of slavery hope from this fact to shelter their system from the odium which it deserves; for be it remembered, that in Bermuda, slavery exists in a form comparatively mild, and that even in this case, the poor men were prevented from claiming their freedom, solely by the power of friendship and the influence of domestic attachments—principles which, it is well known, would lead human nature to endure persecution itself, rather than

be torn from a class of loved objects.—However sensible the men might be of the great benefit offered to them individually, in the change from slavery to freedom; it was clear that that benefit was only to be obtained by breaking every tie of natural affection and duty to their wives and children, whom they had left behind in Bermuda. Rather than remain here as freemen, they chose to partake of affliction with those they loved, like the lawgiver of the Jews, rather than, by deserting them, to escape from slavery. After this, are we to be told that the negroes have not those sentiments of natural affection, that should restrain those who hold them in bondage, from separating the members of a family from each other?"

But, in point of fact, slavery in the Bermudas bears no resemblance whatever in its characteristic features to the slavery of our sugar colonies. The Bermudas produce no sugar, nor will their soil pay for cultivation under the stimulus of the whip. Their occupations are almost wholly either domestic, or mechanic, or connected with fishing and navigation; and none of these occupations admit of the driving system, nor of those exactions of labour by night, as well as by day, which wear down the strength, and shorten the lives of the slaves in our sugar colonies. The condition of the slaves is, of course, materially raised above the brutish level to which the impulse of the lash necessarily reduces the human team. The stimulating motive to labour is necessarily changed, in some degree, from that of an escape from mere bodily pain to those higher inducements which act upon free and intelligent minds. Even the third of their earnings is, of itself, a powerful incitement to industry and good conduct. What a change would it make in the condition of the Jamaica slave if not only the nature of his employment exempted him from the physical excitement of the driving-whip, and he were delivered from the night labour of crop; but if a third part of his time were regularly given up to him, so that, besides the Sundays, he should have two days in the week to himself, or 104 days in the year, wherein to labour for his own benefit, instead of the twenty-six days, which are all he has, besides Sundays, at present?

The Bermudian slaves are, moreover, all natives of the islands where their progenitors have lived for at least two or three generations. As compared with the lot that may follow his expatriation, the slave of Bermuda is, probably, wise in preferring his present condition. Supposing him to escape to the United States, he would be immediately taken up and sold as a slave. The same fate would await him in all the colonies of the West Indies. He cannot even embark on board a ship of any nation, as a seaman, without incurring the risk, should he touch at any port where slavery prevails, of being seized, on the ground of his complexion alone, and sold again into a far worse bondage than that from which he had escaped. Let it be considered what might be his condition even in England, independently of climate. How much would the Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese refugees be content to have borne in their own country, and what dangers of oppression, imprisonment, and even death would they not have encountered, could they have foreseen the variety of actual evils they have sustained in exile. The Bermudian slave who should exile himself, besides being liable to the same evils, if ever, either by choice or by accident, he should return to his native Island, would be liable to death as a runaway. He could never hope again to see the face of a relation however endeared to him. He could only attempt to revisit the





